

[From the Democratic Review.] POLITICAL PORTRAITS.

JAMES K. POLK.

Mr. Polk, who is the oldest of ten children, was born in Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, on the second of November, 1795, and is consequently in the forty-third year of his age. His ancestors, whose name Pollock, has by obvious transition, assumed its present form, emigrated, more than a century ago, from Ireland, a country from which many of our most distinguished men are proud to derive their origin. They established themselves first in Maryland, where some of their descendants still sojourn. The branch of family from which is sprung the subject of this memoir, removed to the neighborhood of Carlisle, in Pennsylvania, and thence, to the western frontier of North Carolina, some time before the commencement of the Revolutionary war. Its connection with that eventful struggle is one of rare distinction. On the twentieth of May, 1775, consequently more than a twelvemonth anterior to the declaration of the Fourth of July, the assembled inhabitants of Mecklenburg county, publicly absolved themselves from their allegiance to the British Crown, and issued a formal manifesto of Independence, in terms of manly eloquence, which have become "familiar as household words" to the American people. Col. Thos. Polk, the prime mover in this act of noble daring, one of the first signers of the Declaration of Independence, was the great uncle of the present Speaker, who is also connected with the Alexanders, Chairman and Secretary of the famous meeting, as well as with Dr. Ephraim Brevard, the author of the Declaration itself.

The father of Mr. Polk was a farmer of unassuming pretensions, but enterprising character. Thrown upon his own resources in early life, he became the architect of his own fortunes. He was a warm supporter of Mr. Jefferson, and through life a firm and consistent republican. In the autumn of 1-06, he removed to Tennessee, where he was among the first pioneers of the fertile valley of Duck River, then a wilderness, but now the most flourishing portion of the State. The magical growth of a country which was but yesterday redeemed from the sole dominion of nature, is a phenomenon of great moral and political interest, and cannot fail to impress a character of strength and enterprise upon the authors and participants of the wonderful result. If we can man launch or halt when all around him is expanding and advancing with irrepressible energy? In this region Mr. Polk still resides, so that he may be said, literally, to have grown with its growth, and strengthened with its strength. Of course, in the infancy of its settlement, the opportunities for instruction could not have been great. Notwithstanding this disadvantage—and the still more formidable one of a painful affliction, from which, after years of suffering, he was finally relieved by a surgical operation—he acquired the elements of a good English education.—Apprehending that his constitution had been too much impaired to permit the confinement of study, his father determined, much however, against the will of the son, to make him a commercial man; with this view actually placed him, with a merchant. Upon what slender threads hang the destinies of life! A little more, and the unpromising opment of the Bank of the United States, the democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives, might have been at this day, in spite of his origin and early tendencies, a Whig preacher of panics, uttering jeremiads for the fate of the shadowy and intangible thing yelped "credit system," "If shape it might be called, that shape had none.

Distinguished in member, joint, or limb; Or substance might be called, that shadow seen'd. For each seem'd either."

He remained a few weeks in a situation adverse to his wishes and incompatible with his taste. Finally his earnest appeals succeeded in overcoming the resistance of his father, and in July, 1813, he was placed first under the care of Dr. Henderson, and subsequently, at the academy of Murfreesborough, Tennessee, then under the direction of Mr. Samuel P. Black, justly celebrated in that region as a classical teacher. In the autumn of 1815, he entered the University of North Carolina, having, in less than two years and a half thoroughly prepared himself to commence his collegiate course. It will be seen from this hasty sketch, that the history of the Speaker furnishes an interesting example of talent and perseverance triumphing over disheartening difficulties in early life. So frequent are such instances, that it would almost seem that true merit requires the ordeal of adverse circumstances, to strengthen its temper and distinguish it from unsubstantial pretensions.

Mr. Polk's career at the University was distinguished. At each semi-annual examination, he bore away the first honor, and finally graduated in 1818, with the highest distinction of his class, and with the reputation of being the first scholar in both the mathematics and classics.

Returning to Tennessee, from the State which is in two senses, his alma mater, with health considerably impaired by excessive application, Mr. Polk, in the beginning of the year 1819 commenced the study of the law in the office of Senator Grundy, and in 1820 was admitted to the bar. He commenced his professional career in the county of Maury, with great advantage, derived from the connection of his family with its early settlement. To this hour his warmest friends are the sharers of his father's early privations and difficulties, and the associates of his own youth. But his success was due to his personal qualities, still more than to extrinsic advantages. A republican in habits as well as in principles, depending for the maintenance of his dignity upon the esteem of others, and not his own assumption, his manners conciliated the general good. The confidence of his friends was justified by the result. His thorough academic preparation, his accurate knowledge of the

law, his readiness and resources of debate, his unwearied application to business, secured him, at once, full employment, and in less than a year he was already a leading practitioner. Such prompt success in a profession where the early stages are proverbially slow and discouraging, falls to the lot of few.

Mr. Polk continued to devote some years exclusively to the laborious prosecution of his profession, with a progressive augmentation of reputation, and the more solid rewards by which it is accompanied. In 1823, he entered upon the stormy career of politics, being chosen to represent his county in the State Legislature, by a heavy majority over the former incumbent, but not without formidable opposition. He was, for two successive years, a member of that body, where his ability for debate, his talents for business at once gave him reputation. The early personal and political friend of Gen. Jackson he was one of those who in the sessions of 1823, '4 called that distinguished man from his retirement by electing him to the Senate of the United States; and he looks back with pride to the part he took in an act which was followed by such important consequences. In August, 1825 being then in his thirtieth year, Mr. Polk was chosen to represent his district in Congress, and in the ensuing December took his seat in that body, where he has remained ever since. He brought into the national councils those fundamental principles to which he has adhered through all the personal mutations of party. From his earliest youth he was a republican of the "strictest sect." He has ever regarded the Constitution of the United States as an instrument of specific and limited powers, and that doctrine is at the very foundation of the democratic creed. Of course, he has ever been, what is termed a strict constructionist, repudiating, above all things, the latitudinarian interpretations of federalism, which tend to the consolidation of all power in the central government. He has signified his hostility to these usurping doctrines in all their modes. He has always refused his assent to the appropriation of money by the Federal Government for what he deems the unconstitutional purpose of constructing works of internal improvement within the States. He took ground early against the constitutionality, as well as expediency, of a National Bank; and in August, 1824, consequently several months before the appearance of Gen. Jackson's first message, announced then his opinions in a published letter to his constituents. He has ever been opposed to an oppressive tariff for protection, and was, at all times, the strenuous advocate of a reduction of the revenue to the economical wants of the Government. Entertaining these opinions, as we have occasion to illustrate and entering Congress as he did, at the first session after the election of the younger Adams he prominently took his stand against the broad and dangerous doctrine developed in the message of that Chief Magistrate, and was during the continuance of his administration firmly and resolutely, but not factiously, opposed to its leading measures.

When Mr. Polk entered congress he was with one or two exceptions the junior member of that body. But capacity like his could not long remain unnoticed. In consequence of the palpable disregard of the public will manifested in the election by the House of Mr. Adams, together with the means by which it was effected, a proposition was brought forward and much discussed at the time, to amend the constitution in such manner as to give the choice of President immediately and irrevocably to the people. In favor of this proposition, Mr. Polk made his first speech in congress, which at once attracted the attention of the country by the force of its reasoning, the copiousness of its research, and the spirit of honest indignation by which it was animated. It was at once seen that his ambition was to distinguish himself by substantial merit rather than rhetorical display, the rock upon which most young orators split. At that same session, that egregious measure of political Quixotism the Penamission, which was proposed in contempt of the sound maxim, to cultivate friendship alliances with none, gave rise to an entangling alliance with none, gave rise to a protracted debate in both Houses of congress. The exploded federal doctrine was upon this occasion revived, that as under the constitution, the President and Senate exclusively are endowed with the treaty-making faculty, and that of originating and appointing to missions, their acts under that power become the supreme law of the land, nor can the House of Representatives deliberate upon, much less, in the exercise of a sound discretion, refuse the appropriations necessary to carry them into effect. Against a doctrine so utterly subversive of the rights and powers of the popular branch of Congress, as well as of the fundamental principles of democracy, Mr. Polk strenuously protested, embodying his views in a series of resolutions, which produced, in a tangible shape, the doctrines on this question of the republican party of '98. The first of the resolutions which presents the general principle with brevity and force, runs thus: "that it is the constitutional right and duty of the House of Representatives, when called upon for appropriations to defray the expenses of foreign missions, to deliberate of the expediency or inexpediency of such missions, and to determine and act thereon, as in their judgment may seem most conducive to the public good."

In December, 1827, two years after his entrance in the House, Mr. Polk was placed on the important committee of Foreign affairs, and some time after was appointed, in addition, chairman of the Select committee to which was referred that portion of the President's message calling the attention of congress to the probable accumulation of a surplus in the Treasury, after the anticipated extinguishment of the National Debt. As the head of this committee he made a lucid report, replete with the soundest doctrines, ably enforced, denying the constitutional power of congress to collect from the people, for distribution, a surplus beyond the wants of the Government and maintaining that the

revenue should be reduced to the exigencies of the public service.

In December, 1832, he was transferred to the committee of Ways and means, with which his connection has been so distinguished. At that session the Directors of the Bank of the United States were summoned to Washington, and examined upon oath, before the committee just named. A division of opinion resulted in the presentation of two reports.—That of the majority, which admitted that the Bank had exceeded its lawful powers, by interfering with the plan of the government, to pay off the three per cent. stock, was tame, and unaccompanied by pertinent facts, or elucidating details. Mr. Polk, in behalf of the minority, made a detailed report, communicating all the material circumstances, and presenting conclusions utterly adverse to the institution which had been the subject of inquiry. This arrayed against him the whole bank power, which he was made to feel in a quarter where he had every thing at stake, for upon his return to his district he found the most formidable opposition mustered against him for his course upon this question. The friends of the United States Bank held a meeting at Nashville to denounce his report. The most unscrupulous misrepresentations were resorted to in order to prove that he had destroyed the credit of the West, by proclaiming that his countrymen were unworthy of mercantile confidence. The result, however, was that after a violent contest, Mr. Polk was re-elected by a majority of more than three thousand. Fortunately for the stability of our institutions, the panics which "frighten cities from their propriety," do not sweep with the same desolating force over the scattered dwellings of the country.

Towards the close of the memorable session of 1835, Mr. Speaker Stevenson resigned the chair, as well as his seat in the House.—The majority of the democratic party preferred Mr. Polk as his successor, but in consequence of division in its ranks, the Opposition, to whom his prominent and uncompromising course had rendered him less acceptable, succeeded in electing a gentleman, then a professed friend, but since a decided opponent of the President and his measures. Mr. Polk's defeat produced no change in his course. He remained faithful to his party, and assiduous in the performance of arduous duties. In December, 1835, he was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, and chosen again in September last, after an animated contest. The duties of this difficult situation, it is now conceded, he has discharged with rare fidelity and fairness. In the beginning unusual difficulties were thrown in his way by animosity which was sometimes carried to an extent that called forth general animadversion.—During the first session in which he presided more appeals were taken from his decision than had occurred in the whole period since the origin of the Government; but he was uniformly sustained by the House, and by many of his political adversaries. Strangers of all parties who visit Washington are struck with the dignity, promptitude, and impartiality with which he presides over the deliberations of the House. It was with great pleasure that we heard, but the other day, an eminent member of the Opposition in that body, bear the same testimony. Notwithstanding the violence with which he had been assailed, congress passed, at the close of the session in 1837, an unanimous vote of thanks to its presiding officer, from whom it separated with the kindest feelings; and no man, now, could enjoy its confidence and friendship in a higher degree. His calmness and good temper have allayed the violence of opposition, in a station for which his quickness, and sagacity eminently qualify him.

Few public men have pursued a firmer or more consistent course than Mr. Polk. Upon several emergencies when the current of popular opinion threatened to overwhelm him, he has sternly adhered to the convictions of duty, preferring to sink with his principles, rather than rise by their abandonment. This, we have noticed, was the cause after his bank report in 1833, and he incurred the same hazard, when in 1835, he avowed his unalterable purpose not to separate from the democratic party in the presidential election. On each of these occasions, the popular excitement in his district would have appalled and driven back a timid and time-serving politician. Had he been governed by selfish motives; had he consulted his own personal ease and looked to his re-election alone; had he in short regarded success more than principle he would have yielded his own conviction to the indications not to be mistaken, of popular opinion. But he took counsel of nobler sentiments and with a fearlessness characteristic of his whole public course avowed and persisted in his well-matured determinations. He succeeded in carrying truth home to an enlightened constituency, was sustained by increasing majorities, and is now so strong in the good will of his district, that at the last election no opposition was attempted. Nothing can be more false than the charge of subservieny which has been brought against him, in common with the prominent supporters of the late administration. It is true that despising the cant of no party, which has ever been the pretext of selfish, and treacherous politicians, and convinced that in a popular government nothing can be accomplished by isolated action, he has always acted with his party; as far as principle would justify. Upon most of the prominent measures of the late administration however his opinions were not only generally known but he had actually spoken or voted, before the accession of Gen. Jackson to power.

Mr. Polk is a ready debater with a style and manner forcible and impressive. In discussion, he has always been distinguished by great courtesy, having never been known to indulge in offensive personality, which, considering the prominence of his course, and the ardor of his convictions, is no small merit. As a proof of his exemplary assiduity, he said never to have missed a division, while occupying a seat on the floor of the House, his name being found upon every list of the yeas & nays. His ambition was to be

a useful member as well as a prominent actor and accordingly he performed more than a full share of the active business of legislation. In person he is of middle stature, with a full angular brow, and a quick and penetrating eye. The expression of his countenance is grave but his serious cast is often relieved by a particularly pleasant smile indicative of the amenity of his disposition. The amiable character of his private life which has ever been upright and pure secures to him the esteem and friendship of all who have the advantage of his acquaintance.

We are authorized to announce JOHN THROUSDALE as a candidate for Assessor and Tax Collector of Marshall county.

Notice

I HEREBY forwarn all persons against purchasing Section seven, Range Five, Town Eight; Section Twenty-six, same Township and Range; Section Twelve, Range Six, Township Eight; and South Fraction of Section One, Range Six, and Township Eight, situated in Panola county, belonging to Robert E. Beatty. The notes for the purchase money being as yet unpaid and the said land being subject to the payment of the same.

NEEDHAM STEVENS, By Attorney, B. H. JOHNSON. Aug. 24, 1839.—5w Prs fee \$6

Notice

By virtue of an execution to me directed from the circuit court of Marshall county I will sell for cash at the court house door in the town of Holly Springs on Monday the 16th day of September next all the right title and interest that Joseph Talkington has in and to the south east quarter of section 13 of Township 6 range 5 west Levied on as the property of said Talkington to satisfy an execution in favour of John Ray for the use of George M. Terrill; sale within the lawful hours; this the 11th day of August 1839.

L. McCROSKEY, sh'ff. By D. M. DAVIS, D. Sh'ff. 3t—Printers fee 5 dollars.

Notice

By virtue of an execution to me directed from the circuit court of Marshall county I will sell for cash in the town of Holly Springs on Monday the 16th day of September next, all the right title claim and interest; that Paschal Callicut has in and to the south west quarter of section 33, township 4, range 4, west levied on as the property of Paschal Callicut to satisfy an execution in favour of Samuel Johnston; sale within the lawful hours; this 11th day of August 1839.

L. McCROSKEY sh'ff. By D. M. Davis D. sh'ff. 3t—Printers fee 5 dollars.

Sh'ff Sale.

By virtue of two fias to me directed from the circuit court of Marshall county one in favor of Travis Sage and one in favor of R. H. Patillo I will sell for cash at the court House in Holly Springs on the 3d Monday of September next all the right title and interest of Thomas D. Mason to 12 acres of land it being the south part of lot No 32 on section 1 T. 4, Range 3, west; sale within lawful hours.

L. McCROSKEY sh'ff. August 14th 1839. Printers fee 4 dollars,

Sh'ff Sale.

By Virtue of an alias fias to me directed from the circuit court of Marshall county I will sell at the court house in Holly Springs on the 16th of September next all the right title claim and interest that Elbert Early hath in and to lots No. 53 and 54 as laid down on the addition to the Plan of Waterford in Marshall county at the instance of William E. Williams and Wyatt Epps to satisfy their debt and cost; sale within lawful hours.

L. McCROSKEY, Sh'ff August 14th 1839. 3t—Printers fee 4 dollars.

The State of Mississippi } Marshall county. Probate Court June Term 1839.

William G. Wynne Administrator of the estate of Richard A. Echols De'd. this day exhibited on oath to the court, an account of the personal estate, and debts, of the deceased, as far as he can discover the same, which account is received by the court, and ordered to be recorded.

Whereupon, upon the petition of the said administrator, (it appearing to the court that said estate is insolvent) it is therefore ordered by the court, that Jesse Lewellen and Tryon M. Yancy be, and they are hereby appointed Commissioners to receive and examine all claims of the several creditors of said estate; and said commissioners shall give notice of the times and places of their meeting, to attend the creditors, for receiving and examining their claims by publishing the same in the Marshall County Republican, a newspaper published in the town of Holly Springs, and nine months shall be allowed the creditors for

bringing in and proving their claims before said commissioners.

WIL. H. BOURL ND. A Copy. Test.

In Obedience to the above order, we the undersigned commissioners will attend at the office of the Probate Clerk in Holly Springs on the 4th Monday of September, December and March next when and where all persons having claims against the estate of the said Richard A. Echols, will be and appear with the evidence in support thereof that the same may be adjudicated as the law directs.

T. M. YANCY, JESSE LEWELLEN. August 16th 1839. 4t—15. THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, Marshall county. Thomas N. Giles & Wife, VS: Caleb P. McKee.

In this case the Plaintiff having obtained an attachment for the sum of six hundred and fifty dollars besides costs, against the estate of the defendant, which is now pending in the circuit court of Marshall county. Notice is hereby given that unless the defendant shall appear, give special bail, and plead within the time limited for his appearance, judgment will be entered, and the estate attached will be sold.

J. C. ALDERSON, C'k. August 17th 1839. 4t—Printers fee 5 dollars. THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, Marshall County. Lorenzo D. West, VS: Joel Baker.

In this case the Plaintiff having obtained an attachment for the sum of Ninety five dollars besides costs against the estate of the defendant, which is now pending in the circuit Court of Marshall county. Notice is hereby given, that unless the defendant shall appear, give special bail, and plead within the time limited for his appearance judgment will be entered, and the estate attached will be sold.

J. C. ALDERSON, C'k. August 17th, 1839. 4t—Printers fee 5 dollars.

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, Marshall County. Martin Bucks vs. Joel Baker

In this case the plaintiff having obtained an attachment for the sum of \$53.66 besides costs against the estate of the defendant, which is now pending in the Circuit Court of Marshall co. Notice is hereby given, that unless the defendant shall appear, give special bail, and plead within the time limited for his appearance, judgment will be entered, and the estate attached will be sold.

J. C. ALDERSON, C'k. Aug. 17, 1839. 4t—Printers fee \$5.

The State of Mississippi, Marshall County. Ziba L. Gower vs. Wm. Fulgham

In this case the plaintiff having obtained an attachment for the sum of \$187.50 besides costs, against the estate of the defendant which is now pending in the Circuit Court of Marshall co. Notice is hereby given that unless the defendant shall appear, give special bail, and plead within the time limited for his appearance, judgement will be entered, and the estate attached will be sold.

J. C. ALDERSON, C'k. Aug. 17 1839. 4t—Printers fee \$5.

The State of Mississippi, Marshall County. Wm. H. Jenkins vs. Allen A. Hooker

In this case the plaintiff having obtained an attachment for the sum of \$218.25 besides cost, against the estate of the defendant, which is now pending in the Circuit Court of Marshall co. Notice is hereby given that unless the defendant shall appear, give special bail and plead within the time limited for his appearance, judgment will be entered and the estate attached will be sold.

J. C. ALDERSON C'k. Aug. 17, 1839. 4t—Printers fee \$5.

SH'FF SALE.

On Monday the 16th, of Sept. next I will sell to the highest bidder for cash, at the court House door in the Town of Oxford all the Right title, claim and interest that James L. Wright has in and to a Steam Saw and Grist Mills, a fine lot of saw logs, also all his right, title, claim and interest to two Lots of Land designated and Known in the plan of the Town of Wyatt, as Lots No 268 and 269, upon which said Mills are built also a framed Dwelling House, containing thirty acres Levied on as the property of said Wright to satisfy sundry fias, to me directed from the Hon. Circuit court of Lafayette county, sale within lawful hours.

C. G. BUTLER, sh'ff. Oxford, Aug. 2nd, 1839. Printers fee 6 dollars.

Taken up by James Speed 2 miles West of Hudsonville one Sorrel horse 9 years old 15 1-2 hands high, some saddle marks, shod all round appraised to \$75. Also 1 Brown Bay horse 4 years old a Blenheim over his Left Eye star in his face 15 hands high appraised to \$60. Taken up by Abram Duncan 1 1/2 miles N.E. of Holly Springs 1 Black mare 1 year 8 or 9 years old branded with Son the Right thigh Blaze face; appraised to \$25. Also one Bone coat 4 months old Blaze face; Appraised to \$10. Aug. 12, 1839. G. W. GRAHAM, m'gr.